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ABSTRACT

Symbolic internationalization is an elementary feature of industrialized society. The phenomena accompanying foreign language use will affect daily habits of communication as long as commercial advertising, mass media entertainment, and cosmopolitan approaches remain part of modern life styles. A national language no longer suffices to satisfy all communication needs. Speech and language professionals must accept the presence of symbolic functions of foreign languages and linguistic influences. The most flexible attitude towards symbolic internationalization involves an acknowledgement of the human need for emotion and even irrationalism in an otherwise technocratic world. Contains 22 references. (LB)

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SYMBOLIC INTERNATIONALIZATION: BEYOND THE PRACTICAL USE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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Internationalization as a factor in intercultural communication

Intercultural communication is a phenomenon with many facets, and an essential element of our modern age is the degree to which its importance has increased. This phenomenon must be seen as having many facets because its effectiveness is displayed on at least three basic levels:

a) Face-to-face interaction

When people who belong to different speech communities want to interact, they have to agree on the means of communication they are going to use. If none of the participants in the interaction has a command of the other's mother tongue, they have to choose a language of wider communication which may be a second or a foreign language (eg. English used among Hindi-speaking people and Tamils in India), a *lingua franca*, or a world language. (A *lingua franca* is not necessarily identical with a world language. For example, Swahili, used as a *lingua franca* among people in South-East Africa, is not a world language.) In a world-wide comparison, English is undoubtedly the language of widest communication, followed by French, a language which is more regionally limited.

b) Interaction on the institutional level

Intercultural communication is an elementary component of international relations (ie. political contacts, trade relations, business negotiations). On the institutional level the choice and the use of a language of wider communication are both more strongly formalized than they are on the level of face-to-face interaction. Recall that the number of languages in international organizations is fairly limited (eg. English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Russian, and Chinese as

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official or working languages in the UN). As for the latter organization, German has enjoyed a special status since 1975. All proceedings of the UN General Assembly are translated into German, although German is not a working language. In most international organizations English plays a dominant part as an official or working language.

c) Interaction between languages as cultural vehicles

As a consequence of intercultural communication functioning on levels (a) and (b), the vocabulary of major and minor languages of the world has steadily internationalized (Akulenko 1972). English plays an ever increasing role as a promoting factor of the international neologisms which penetrate the lexical structures of local languages in the fields such as technology, industrial economy, commerce, and public relations, to name but a few. For example, about 80 percent of the Japanese vocabulary used in the automotive industry and in computer technology are of English origin (see Arakawa 1982 for an inventory of foreign terms in Japanese). English thus dominates the Japanese language in this regard, even though the Japanese have produced standards of high technology themselves for many years. The impact of English is also remarkable in those languages with the lexical structures which have long been the objects of control by language cultivation or planning. For example, almost 8,000 English neologisms have entered the Swedish vocabulary since 1945. French has also contributed its share in the process of internationalization. However, this is mostly related to colonial history, as in the case of Vietnamese (Haarmann 1986b), or to the importance of French in the domains of the so-called *francophonie* 'French-speaking community' (Tétu 1987).

Russian is among the languages of wider communication which promote internationalization. This is true within the borders of the Soviet Union, where the languages of more than 120 nationalities have been influenced by Russian (Achunzjanov et al. 1987). The Soviet type of internationalization (Russian *internacionalizacija*) includes lexical modernization as an important factor for promoting an internationalistic terminology in the national languages of the Soviet Union. Russian loanwords or calques on the basis of Russian expressions have penetrated many spheres of the vocabulary of the non-Russian languages spoken there. Elements of Russian origin may be found in the common lexical

stock used for daily interaction (see Kolesnik et al. 1987:99 ff. for Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Moldavian and other languages), and they are frequent in all domains of the technical-technological terminology (see Beloded and Dešeriev 1977 for a survey). The Russian language also is the mediator of the West European terms which penetrated its lexical structures beginning about the year 1700 (Haarmann 1984). German has a hybrid status as regards lexical internationalization. On the one hand, its vocabulary has been strongly influenced by English (Wahrig 1987). On the other hand, German has exerted an influence on many languages both in Europe and overseas (Haarmann 1989b).

Intercultural communication on the three levels mentioned in the foregoing is most intense in such settings of bilingualism and multilingualism which include one of the world languages. As far as people speak a world language as a foreign language, their language use is, most likely, influenced by the way in which they use their mother tongue. As a consequence of regular interference in the use of foreign languages, local modes of speaking English, French, Russian etc. have emerged (ie. ethnic styles). English is particularly rich in ethnic styles; there are Hindish (English used by the Hindi-speaking people in India), Japalish (English used by the Japanese), Pringlish (English used by Puerto Ricans in the United States), and other styles (see Kachru 1982, 1983, Watanabe 1983).

In the computer age, an ever increasing internationalization has become a typical feature of intercultural communication, so that the one is intrinsically interwoven with the other. Many scholars have investigated various aspects of internationalization in different parts of the world. Research has almost exclusively concentrated on the practical functions of intercultural communication and the resulting internationalization. Communication is generally understood as a process of conveying information from one person to another, this being the equivalent of reducing the role of language to its informative-instrumental function. Language has many other functions, it serves to express emotions and intentions, attitudes, evaluations and various features of ethnic identity (see Haarmann 1986a for the latter). In addition to its instrumental function of conveying information, language, also in intercultural communication, displays the other functions mentioned in the foregoing. People who interact by using a world language carry values about that cultural vehicle. Many of those values are stereotypes which are closely associated with prestige

as a factor motivating people to use a world language (Haarmann 1990b). Taking into consideration the broad panorama of interactional functions of a language, two domains may be distinguished for the basic concept 'internationalization', namely *practical* and *symbolic* internationalization.

Symbolic internationalization, language stereotypes and the role of the mass media

The amazing thing about symbolic internationalization is that foreign languages play a role in intercommunication, although there is no practical use in conveying information. All the elements of foreign languages which fall under this category may be replaced by elements of a local language although, as a rule, this is not the case. Symbolic internationalization is a matter of *in*group communication. The foreign elements in commercial advertising, for example, are meant to address local people, not necessarily foreigners. Contrasting with this type of communication, practical internationalization pertains to the domain of *out*group communication, that is to communication between local people and foreigners. English is used in many countries where this is neither the mother tongue of people nor an official language of the state. Anybody who lives in such a country (eg. Germany, Finland, Japan) will have noticed that, in the world of entertainment and commercial advertising, English is used in various functions which are symbolic rather than practical. This may be singing a popular song in English, addressing the audience by using English phrases (eg. an entertainer who starts his show by saying "ladies and gentlemen"), using catch slogans, giving names to domestic products, or inserting English as an "exotic" spice in the layout of magazines.

People have become accustomed to the idea that using English in functions for which it is not practical on logical grounds is a popular feature of social life in modern industrialized society, and the most frequent answer which an investigator may elicit from a Japanese, German or Finn in this regard is that "English is fashionable". Such a statement on the non-practical role of English in a country which is not itself English-speaking actually conceals more than it reveals, since it does not contain any kind of explanation of why this is so. The status of English as a world language certainly plays a part in promoting its role in the emergence of symbolic internationalization. There can be no symbolic internationalization without practical internationalization. And yet, symbolic

internationalization relies on sentimental values of language use while, in practical internationalization, such values remain in the background. "English is fashionable" actually means that people throughout the world readily attribute values to this language which are associated with cosmopolitanism and the flair of modernity. In the modern world of steadily increasing intercommunication cosmopolitanism in particular seems to have developed into a maxim of thinking and lifestyle among those who can afford it, and into a symbol of social advance among those who do not belong to the more prosperous strata of society and only dream of a better life.

Associating the use of English with a cosmopolitan lifestyle is a widespread cultural stereotype. A cultural stereotype is never isolated, but forms instead part of a mosaic of stereotyping values which people carry along. According to findings in the fields of human biology, ethnology and social psychology, human beings make use of stereotypes and, by doing so, give shape to the profile of values attributed to the communities of which they are members; see Müller (1987) for a general outline, Haarmann (1986a) for the role of language. At the same time, foreign cultures are also stereotyped and their attributes are usually contrasted with those of the home culture. The symbolic values which are attributed to world languages are specific for each. For instance, the cosmopolitan touch of English in symbolic internationalization contrasts with the symbolic values of other world languages. With respect to the use of world languages in the Japanese business world, the profile of stereotyping values has been investigated in a recent project (see Haarmann 1989a:11 ff., 129 ff.). Alongside the stereotypes for English, cosmopolitanism and modernity, the following stereotyping values were identified for other languages: female elegance and refined taste for French, cosiness and comfortable lifestyle for German. These differences in the value profiles found for individual languages highlight differential structures of symbolic internationalization in Japan.

The symbolic functions of English in the world-wide process of internationalization are manifold, ranging from the popular use of slogans in the domain of public relations (eg. the slogan *discover Japan*, used by National Railways in Japan) to the naming of shops and agencies (eg. *pretty look* for a Finnish fashion boutique). The mass media play a key role in the promulgation of foreign languages in symbolic functions, and they have the edge regarding the intensity with which symbolic internationalization manipulates the mind of

magazine readers, listeners of radio programs and television viewers. Commercial advertising through the mass media, in particular, makes ample use of cultural stereotypes and symbolic values associated with foreign languages in order to provide consumers with the intended "mental injection" of internationalization. For the Japanese settings, evidence has been given for the varied use of English in the information sector of the mass media, in entertainment and in commercial advertising (see Haarmann 1989a:38 ff.). Symbolic internationalization also works in the information sector. For instance, there is a program on Japanese television which is called *Sports Nine*. This is sports news at 9 PM. Despite the fashionable English title, the program, which is given in Japanese, addresses Japanese TV viewers.

Symbolic internationalization carries with it more than the mere cosmopolitan feel to communities where English is used in such a function. There also is the effect of foreign influence on the lexical structures of a local language. As a rule, English does not only influence local languages through practical internationalization, but also in its symbolic functions. The linguistic influence of English is apparent in the structures of local languages with respect to distinct language varieties. In the concrete case of the conditions of internationalization in Japan and, in particular, with respect to the Japanese language, English influence can be specified regarding the varieties of colloquial Japanese, literary Japanese, and technical varieties in the following way (see Figure 1).

Although the impact of English on a given local language may vary considerably in its concrete manifestation (eg. amount and/or semantic distribution of loanwords) it can be assumed with good reason that all the sources mentioned above may potentially work together in the process of influence. Nevertheless, the intensity with which one source or another may predominate depends on the sociocultural conditions in a given community. For instance, in Japan, source (3) dominates lexical innovation whereas, in Finland, this source plays a comparatively more moderate role for the formation of technical technology. This difference reflects the working of language cultivation including the control of lexical innovation in Finland, rather than a difference in the intensity of the English impact. In Japan, the kind of language cultivation typical of the Scandinavian countries (see *Språk i Norden* 1986) is unknown. To

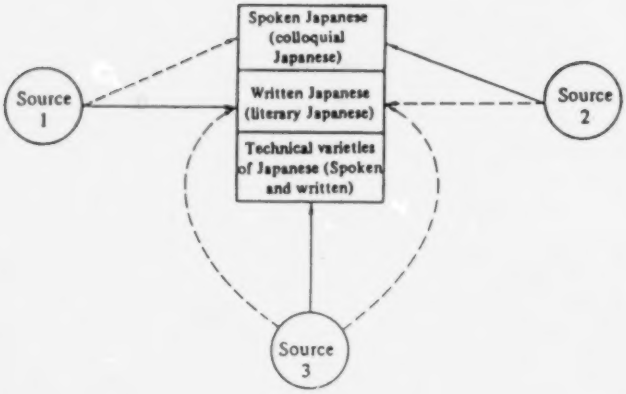

Figure 1. Three main sources of English influence on the modern Japanese language.

point out another contrast, while source (2) - symbolic internationalization - has a strong impact on colloquial Japanese, in Finland, the Anglicization of the spoken language is, arguably, more apparent in the specific domain of urban slang (ie. Finnish *stadin slangi* 'the informal colloquial koiné of the greater Helsinki area') than in everyday spoken Finnish.

An outline of symbolic internationalization in Finland

Finland is said to be the most Americanized country in Europe, a claim which is not without some justification, but one which needs to be considered critically. It is true as regards the speedy transfer of information, trends in fashion, and cultural items from the United States to Finland. However, it is not true regarding the frequent use of English in symbolic functions. As in Japan, symbolic internationalization through the media of English "copies" neither American standards of language usage nor US-American cultural stereotypes. Instead, it creates local (ie. Finnish) patterns of personal behavior characterized

by a superficial cosmopolitan touch. In Finland, as in Japan or Germany, the symbolic functions of English are predominantly "home-made". Therefore, although elements of English in general, and of its American variety in particular, serve as exotic spices for language usage in the public and private sectors, this cannot be labelled "Americanization".

In Finnish society the use of English in symbolic functions is, by its very nature, more diffuse than any form of practical communication in which transmitting information is the main goal. Distinguishing domains of practical language usage, thus, appears to be much easier than identifying ranges where the use of English is symbolic. And yet, an attempt is made here to distinguish main ranges of symbolic internationalization in the following way:

1. The use of English for addressing the public

1.1. The use of English in the press
(eg. the section title *city young* in a newspaper with job offerings for young people; this section addresses Finnish people, not foreigners. This specific symbolic function of English is clearly distinct from the practical function as in the newspaper section *English news in brief* which is intended to inform tourists from abroad during the summer months);

1.2. The use of English in financial affairs
(eg. *gocard* as the name of a credit card for younger people).

2. The use of English in the business world

2.1. The use of English for naming companies, shops and agencies
(eg. *my garden* - flower shop, *boutique ladybird* - women's fashion, *innovation* - marketing agency);

2.2. The use of English for naming facilities for public services
(eg. English names for restaurants, coffee shops, pubs, and discos);

2.3. The use of English for naming domestic products
(eg. *green* - skin-care cream, *young color* - stockings, *black secret* - licorice);

2.4. The use of English in shop advertising
(eg. *see you!* used as a slogan by Akateeminen Kirjakauppa to catch the eye of customers);

2.5. The use of English in commercial advertising
(eg. using English slogans, catch-words, or product names in mass media advertising, on the radio, on television, in the press: *join the team; the look of 1989; just is must*, etc.).

3. The use of English in entertainment

3.1. English songs composed and sung by Finns

3.2. English elements inserted into the ordinary Finnish language usage in entertainment programs
(eg. addressing people by saying *hello, ladies and gentlemen!*).

4. The use of English in face-to-face interaction among Finns

4.1. English elements and phrases in colloquial speech
(eg. *see you later, bye-bye, have a nice day*);

4.2. English elements in urban colloquial koinés

The overview presented in the foregoing may surprise readers because it covers a wider range of a symbolic use of English in Finnish society than even many Finns may be aware of. And yet it still shows nowhere near the variety it does in the case of Japan where symbolic internationalization becomes apparent in not less than ten main domains with more than twenty-five subdivisions (see Haarmann 1989a:34 ff.). The impact of symbolic English use in the public and private sectors in Japan is much stronger than in Finland. In both countries, nevertheless, symbolic internationalization is the key to understanding the

presence of numerous "superfluous" loanwords from English which have been transferred into the lexicon of colloquial speech. An interesting example is provided by the Japanese treatment of the English adjective *new*. This has been adopted into the spoken language in the expression *o-nyu desu, ne?* 'It's new, isn't it?'. This expression makes an ironical reference to the frequent use of *new* in commercial advertising (Haarmann 1989a:17 ff., 244). The usage of the English affirmative particle *yes* in Finnish is also worth commenting on in this context. The word is used as an expression for something good (eg. Finnish *minusta se on ihan jees* 'in my opinion this is really good'). The adoption of elements such as Japanese *nyu* or Finnish *jees* in (younger) people's usage of their native language can only be reasonably explained as a consequence of symbolic internationalization, since it serves no practical need of intercommunication.

It has to be emphasized that English is not the only source of symbolic internationalization in Finland, although it has the strongest impact on native language usage among the Finnish public and the deepest influence on the lexical structures of Finnish of any of the world languages participating in intercultural communication. The influence of French, for its part, can be traced in the strategies of name-giving for Finnish shops and agencies. Following world-wide stereotypes and social cliches about French culture and language, French names are given to shops for women's fashion (eg. *le chapeau* 'the hat' or *le jardin* de Mélanie 'Mélanie's garden'), to hair dressers' and beauty parlors (eg. *salon d'art* or *femme fatale*), and to fine restaurants (eg. *brasserie* or *mistral*). However, French plays a less important role in symbolic internationalization for Finns than does Italian, which ranks second after English in popularity. The distribution of Italian names for shops and agencies in Finland is wider than in the case of French names (eg. *con amore* - flower shop, *finella* - women's underwear, *avanti!* - orchestra), not to mention the great variety of Italian names for restaurants and pizzerias.

A few years ago, Finnish marketing experts started a campaign for the promotion of Italian in commercial advertising (eg. recent slogans such as *bene! bene!* or Italian names such as *bella bimba* for a shop offering children's fashion). The marketing experts do not seem to have achieved their goals thusfar, and there is little chance of further progress. This is primarily due to the fact that commercial managers seem to be ignorant of the fact that for the Finnish public

Italian is associated with stereotypes which differ from the English ones and, therefore, Italian names or slogans cannot simply "replace" slogans in that language. Consequently, Italian as a source of symbolic internationalization cannot "occupy" the rank held by English. There is an additional factor supporting ignorance in the field: symbolic internationalization has so far not attracted the interest of researchers working in the field of marketing. As an example, I mention Panula's (1988) study on viewers' attitudes toward television advertising where the impact of foreign languages is altogether neglected. The latter aspect (ie. foreign language use in television advertising) has been thoroughly investigated for the Japanese situation in Haarmann (1989a:129 ff.). In Japan, French ranks second and Italian third in the popularity of world languages in symbolic functions among the Japanese public (see Haarmann 1989a:21 ff., 263 ff.).

German occupies a comparatively small niche in symbolic internationalization. It seems that in the two countries under discussion here, Japan and Finland, German is associated with the notion of *Gemütlichkeit* 'cosiness, feeling comfortable', which is manifested, for example, in the German name for a Japanese beer (*Märzen*) or for a Finnish rural hotel (*Gasthaus*). German is among the languages which play a marginal role in symbolic internationalization in the two countries. Other languages may serve as strongly "exotic" spices rather than carrying clearly delimited stereotypes. There is Fazer's *geisha* chocolate with the associated stereotype of Japanese lovely femininity. In Japan, on the other hand, "exotic Finnishness" has conquered the world of commercial advertising. A Japanese producer of cosmetics offers a set of body lotions and skin creams under the collective name *Hämeenlinna*. In the photo setting of the advert, there is a Finnish landscape with a lake and swans, accompanied by an almost poetical text in which the magic way the clean air of northern Europe brightens female skin is praised.

Plans have been made for a comparative study of the Finnish settings of symbolic internationalization in advertising in a future project. Indicative of a better understanding of the actual importance of symbolic internationalization in the Finnish public is the following recent statement: "The book [Haarmann 1989a] is interesting to read because its theme is very relevant to the era of internationalization we are living in. The use of linguistically unrelated foreign

languages in our country is something any Finn can easily notice" (Huhta 1990:22).

Symbolic and practical internationalization - The essential fusion of intercommunication in the computer age

Although symbolic and practical internationalization have been distinguished here as individual forces of intercommunication they frequently interfere with each other when functioning and can thus only be neatly separated for the purpose of sociolinguistic analysis. In daily interaction, the symbolic aspects of foreign language use as described in the foregoing are closely associated with the practical functions, and vice versa. For example, the prestige of English as a world language, although not unique, is borne by the participants in an international meeting on financial affairs, even though their main interest lies in the treatment of concrete information. On the other hand, the conveying of selected information may also be of interest for a marketing manager who addresses TV viewers in a commercial spot even though the cosmopolitan feel which is emphasized by the use of an English slogan is a stronger motor of attraction than any concrete information.

In many cultural settings in Finland, symbolic and practical internationalization may be closely related, although their different kinds of influence can still be observed. A good example of this is provided by the monthly magazine *City*, which appears in Helsinki and which is published in two versions. The main language of the *City lehti* is Finnish and, therefore, it addresses Finns. The Finnish version of this monthly is an illustrative forum of symbolic internationalization, given the impact of English in its layout, and in the commercial texts in particular. The other version, *City in English*, reflects practical internationalization. It addresses Finns and foreigners alike as a source of information about cultural events in the capital. The level of information offered in the *City in English* is much higher than it is in the *City lehti*, since the latter is more oriented towards commercial advertising. A second example is provided by the foreign names for companies and shops encountered in Finland. Among the most frequently used elements is the ethnic term FIN(N)-, which features in many names (see Figure 2).

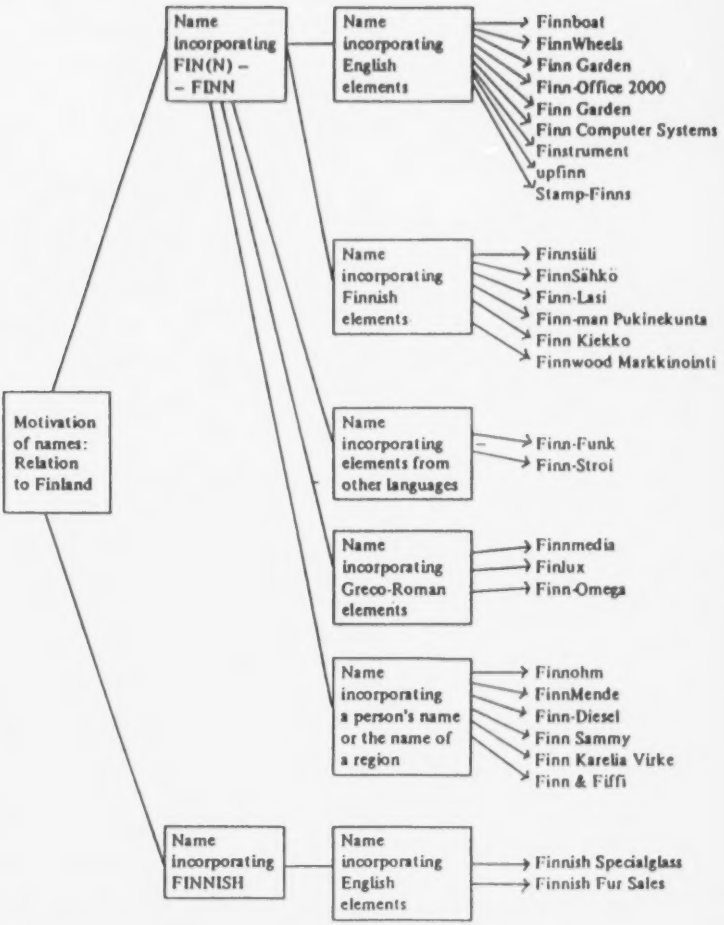

Figure 2. Types of names for Finnish companies and agencies which incorporate elements from foreign languages and indicate a relation to Finland.

Some of the names making reference to Finland and Finnish settings serve practical functions, such as in FINNAIR which emphasizes practical intercommunication between Finns and foreigners. In addition, the use of English in this connection is indicative of the dominant role of this world language in aviation. A similar motivation is true with a name such as FINN-STROI, which symbolizes Finnish-Soviet cooperation in the construction business. However, in most of the names listed here the element FINN serves symbolic functions (eg. in *Finn Garden, upfinn, Finn Wheels*) because those Finnish firms do business mainly with Finns, not with foreigners. It is noteworthy, however, that the signal of "Finnishness" in the business world is also given in the form of domestic expressions such as Finnish *suomalainen* (eg. *Suomalainen Kirjakauppa*) or *Suomi* (eg. *Suomen Yhdyspankki*), thus keeping up traditional patterns of name-giving.

Symbolic internationalization is an elementary feature of our industrialized society, and the phenomena accompanying foreign language use will accompany our daily habits of communication as long as commercial advertising, mass media entertainment, and the feeling of cosmopolitanism remain ingredients of our modern lifestyle. In other words, the times are gone when the national language sufficed to satisfy the communicational needs, both practical and emotional, of the speech community. Whether we accept the symbolic functions of foreign languages as a fashion or reject the associated stereotyping and the linguistic influence as a potential danger to national culture, we have to live with it. The most flexible attitude towards symbolic internationalization is perhaps to acknowledge that it is indicative of human nature which, as we know, cannot live without emotions and a good portion of irrationalism in our otherwise technocratic world.

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